

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 L-02 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OPIC-03 SAM-01

TRSE-00 AID-05 NIC-01 /089 W
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R 141025Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2082

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1412

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, PO

SUBJECT: LABOR'S ROLE IN ABORTIVE COUP

SUMMARY: BY ITS PROMPT AND MILITANT REACTION TO THE ATTEMPTED
COUP OF MARCH 11, ORGANIZED LABOR AGAIN PROVED IT IS DEEPLY
COMMITTED TO THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT
(AFM) AND "THE PEOPLE." ONE RESULT OF THE ABORTIVE COUP WILL BE
TO STRENGTHEN ALREADY EXISTING COMMUNIST CONTROL OVER ORGANIZED
LABOR. END SUMMARY.

1. ATTEMPTED COUP OF MARCH 11 EMPHASIZED THE MILITANT ROLE
CURRENTLY PLAYED BY THE PORTUGUESE LABOR MOVEMENT. UPON
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LEARNING OF OUTBREAK OF COUP, MINISTRY OF LABOR ALERTED

REGIONAL LABOR OFFICES WHICH IN TURN ALERTED LOCAL UNIONS. NUMEROUS LOCAL UNIONS CALLED THEIR MEMBERS TO ASSEMBLE AT UNION HEADQUARTERS FOR FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS. SUCH ANNOUNCEMENTS CARRIED BY RADIO STATIONS AND OCCASIONALLY INCLUDED INSTRUCTIONS TO BRING WEAPONS.

2. EVEN THOUGH COUP ATTEMPT PUT DOWN IN A FEW HOURS, NUMEROUS HIGHWAY TRAFFIC CHECKPOINTS, MANNED BY WORKERS AS WELL AS MILITARY, WERE SUBSEQUENTLY ESTABLISHED THROUGHOUT PORTUGAL. (ONE WORKER, INTERVIEWED ON TV WHILE MANNING CHECKPOINT IN SOUTHERN PORTUGAL, STATED THAT HIS INSTRUCTIONS WERE TO INSPECT AUTOMOBILES AND PASSPORTS OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING TRAVELLERS.)

3. THE LABOR CONFEDERATION, INTERSINDICAL, ISSUED COMMUNIQUE 6:00 PM MARCH 11 ACCUSING "REACTIONARY FORCES IN THE SERVICE OF MONOPOLIES AND LARGE LANDOWNERS, AIDED BY INTERNATIONAL IMPERIALISM," OF ATTEMPTING TO REESTABLISH A FASCIST REGIME. STATEMENT FOLLOWS CURRENT COMMUNIST LINE OF ALL-OUT ENDORSEMENT OF UNITY WITH ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (AFM). NUMEROUS STATEMENTS ISSUED BY INDIVIDUAL UNIONS ATTACKED "CAPITALISM" AND "IMPERIALISM" FOR FOMENTING COUP.

4. BANK WORKERS' UNION DECREED BANK CLOSURE, WHICH STILL IN EFFECT, TO "AVOID THE DISAPPEARANCE OF WEALTH." STATEMENT IMPLIED THAT BANK ASSETS ARE BEING SAFEGUARDED FOR BENEFIT OF "PORTUGUESE PEOPLE" RATHER THAN FOR BANKS' CUSTOMERS.

5. COMMENT: ONE RESULT OF ABORTED COUP IS THAT EVEN THE FEW UNIONS PREVIOUSLY ATTEMPTING TO MAINTAIN A DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE FROM INTERSINDICAL, E.G., THE COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS, HAVE BEEN BROUGHT CLOSER INTO THE FOLD BY ORGANIZED LABOR'S UNIVERSALLY SHARED REPUDIATION OF THE COUP AND ITS SUPPORTERS. AS A CONSEQUENCE, THE COMMUNISTS' PRE-EXISTING HOLD ON ORGANIZED LABOR WILL BE TIGHTENED.
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